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Library Science

EXPLANATION

OF THE

Cutter-Sanborn Author-Marks

(THREE-FIGURE TABLES)

By CHARLES A. CUTTER

FOURTH EDITION

Revised by Kate Emery Jones

LIBRARY BUREAU
BOSTON, MASS.

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THE CUTTER AUTHOR-MARKS.

WHY AND HOW THEY ARE USED.*

It has been found convenient by librarians to arrange some classes of books alphabetically. In Biography, for instance, if the books stand on the shelves in the order of the names of the persons whose lives they relate, one knows that Adams will be at the beginning of the class and Washington at the end and Jefferson somewhere near the middle; and one can go to the shelf and get the life one wants without having to consult a catalog first, which makes a saving, not only of time, but of eyes and patience. Moreover, one will find *all* the lives of Washington standing side by side, which will often not happen on any other plan. In Fiction such an arrangement, either by authors' names or by titles, is almost a necessity. In Poetry and the Drama also it is useful; and, in fact, in every class it is better than an arrangement by size, which merely makes the shelves look a little more orderly, or by accession-number, which has no advantage at all.†

But it is also found that the books must have some marks on the back to keep them in order. The binders' titles will not do, because they often do not contain the word by which the book should be arranged; and when they do the arranger cannot always see at a glance which of several words is the one to arrange by. Moreover, we want some brief mark peculiar to each book, and not belonging to any other copy, by which to charge the volume to the borrower. Therefore I letter on the lower part of the back of each book:

1. In one line, the letters or figures that denote its CLASS and sub-class.

*Some preliminary discussions on this subject may be found in "Plans for numbering with especial reference to fiction, a library symposium."—*Library journal*, 4: 38-47.

†The plea that in science accession order assists study by putting the older works at the beginning of each subject and modern works at the end is true only in the rearrangement of an old library; in a new library, or in the subsequent history of the old library, it would not be valid unless libraries always bought books in the order in which they are published and never received gifts of old books. Chronological order, made up as books usually come into a library, would be a very mottled affair.

2. In another line, the initial of the author's name, followed by certain figures (to be explained later on); this line stands for the AUTHOR'S NAME.

3. In another line, the initial of the TITLE (used only when there are two works by the same author in the same sub-class).

4. In the same line, when there is more than one COPY of the same work, I put 2 for the second copy, 3 for the third, if there is one, and so on.

Class and author.	Class, author and title.	Class, author, title and copy.
YF ·D814	YF ·D814·	YF ·D814·
Defoe's Novels.	r Defoe's Robinson Crusoe.	r ⁴ Robinson Crusoe, 4th copy.

ALPHABETIC ORDER.

Books on the shelves are kept alphabeted by authors by marking them with the initial of the author's family name* followed by one or more decimal figures assigned according to a table so constructed that the names whose initials are followed by some of the *first* letters of the alphabet, have the *first* numbers, and those in which the initials are followed by *later* letters have *later* numbers.

E. g., Garfield, G231	Gore, G666
Gerry, G379	Grand, G751
Gilman, G487	Grote, G881
Glover, G566	Guizot, G969

If the books are arranged in the order of these numbers, of course they will be in alphabetical order.

TO USE THE TABLE.

1. Find the first few letters of the author's name in the table; the figures following added to the initial are the mark:

*In the case of authorless books (anonymous works, periodicals, government publications, etc.), the alphabetical order is determined by the heading adopted for cataloging, according to Cutter's rules for a dictionary catalog. In Biography, when the Decimal Classification is used, the name of the subject of the life should be used instead of the name of the author; in the Expansive Classification, the name of the subject forms part of the class-mark, as Gerry's Life, EG 379.

E. g., for the name Lounsbury the table gives Loun 889, the mark is L889. Aldrich (Aldr 365) is A365, Terhune (Terh 318) T318. Huxley is H986, Macaulay is M117, Spenser S748.

In printing a catalog, the printer should be cautioned not to use the old style figures (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.), in which the figure 1 is the same as the "small capital" letter i.

2. If the first letters of the name do not occur in the table take the letters next previous in the alphabetical order.

E. g., there is no Detm in the table; for Detmold, therefore, we take the number of Deti which gives D481; for Pecksniff the number of Peckh, which gives P368; for Mixter the number of Mitt, M685; for Fappen the number of Fantu, F218.

3. If the number found is already in use, annex another decimal.

E. g., if one wishes to insert Herdman between Herder, H541, and Hereford, H542, a fourth figure makes Herdman H5414. If, again, there is a Harrison, Frederick, H319, Harrison, James, may be numbered with a fourth figure, H3193, Harrison, John, H3195, Harrison, Louis, H3197, and so on. This can be carried to any extent.

In making such insertions it is necessary to consider in what part of the gap the new name will best go, so as to leave room on one side or the other for future insertions.


Except in very large classes, like Fiction or Biography, one rarely gets to the fifth figure. But bad judgment in choosing the fourth figure may hasten the need of adding a fifth.

Avoid using the number 1 as long as other numbers are vacant, because when it is once used nothing can be inserted before it; one cannot put, for instance, anything between 22 and 221. Zero should be used only in extreme cases because it might be mistaken for the letter o of a work-mark; otherwise 220 would come between 22 and 221.

4. It is desirable, even in small libraries, to use three figures as given in the table in Fiction and Biography (except in certain letters such as e, i, o, u, where the table gives but two figures). But in other classes, the first two figures of the number are usually sufficient, and in very small classes, the first figure only need be used.

5. The figures are to be considered as decimals, and arranged on the shelf in the order H2, H21, H211, H2111, H2112, H22, H23, H233, H24, H3, and so on.

That is, all the numbers beginning with 2 come before a number beginning with 3, and all the numbers beginning with 21 before any beginning with 22, and all beginning with 221 before any beginning with 222; just as in a dictionary all the words beginning with *ab* come before words beginning with *ac*, and all the *aca* words come before the *acb* words.

 Some persons are apprehensive that this decimal arrangement will be hard to use, or at least hard to teach to stupid assistants and (when the public are allowed to go to the shelves) to a public unwilling to take the trouble to comprehend. It may be so sometimes; I can only say that I have never had any difficulty with anyone, boy or girl, man or woman, when the arrangement was explained as it is above. But if this is considered a serious objection to the use of these author-marks, the difficulty can be entirely avoided by using two figures with the initial in all cases, treating them as ordinals, and when two names are to be represented by the same combination, so that subdivision becomes necessary, starting a new series of ordinals either from 1 to 9, or from 11 to 99, by putting a point after the first two figures, e. g., H21.1, or H21.11. The stupidest attendant could not fail to comprehend the order H34, H34.1, H34.2, H34.3, H34.4, and so on. As it would be awkward to use two decimal points (H34.2.1, H34.2.2), it would be well to use two figures after the decimal point in very large collections, as Fiction and Biography, thus, H34, H34.11, H34.12, H34.13, etc.

Of course this ordinal method does not allow infinite intercalation. A time will come when some new name cannot be inserted in its proper order, because its number is already occupied. But a notation consisting of an initial followed by four characters provides places for so many names that this misfortune will not occur soon or frequently. And when it does occur the approximate alphabetical arrangement that will here and there result is very much better than no alphabetic order at all.

FURTHER MARKS.*

6. On the shelves three alphabetical series should be made by size, O including all books 25 cm. high or less, Q between 25 and 30, F over 30. These will be indicated by the

*For a discussion of other methods see *Library notes*, vol. 3.

